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suggests itself that this is perhaps an unfamiliar and northern rendering of the story of St. Francis's conversion at the Portiuncula though the church appears to be in course of construction rather than ruined.

R. E. F.

THE SLEEP OF DIANA

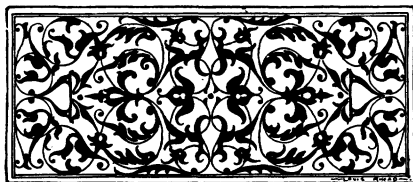
BY COROT

LE SOMMEIL DE DIANE" and its companion piece, the "Orphée saluant la lumière" (now in the Potter Palmer collection), were painted in 1865. An architect of taste, M. Alfred Feydeau, had ordered two large panels for the decoration of a room in the house he was building for Prince Demidoff, and the artist chose these two subjects. The Diana was painted at Fontainebleau in the studio of a friend of Corot's, the painter Comairas. It figured at the Demidoff sale of February, 1868, and during that year was worked over by Corot. A comparison of the etching by Delaunay and of the photographs taken before that date with the picture in its later condition is an invaluable object lesson; one cannot but realize at a glance the enormous improvement in regard to the simplifying of the composition and of the masses, the adding of significant detail, and above all in the refining and ennobling of the silhouette of the trees against the sky. An examination of the signature shows that the "5" of 1865 was then changed, making the date 1868. In April, 1875, the painting figured at a sale at the Hotel Drouot and was bought by M. Breyse, who loaned it, in May of the same year, to the Corot Exhibition at the École des Beaux-Arts, where it figured under a wrong title, "Le Sommeil de

Vénus." It subsequently passed into the possession of Messrs. Durand-Ruel, Cottier, James Inglis, and lastly of Cottier & Co., from whom it has now been purchased by the Museum.

This painting is one of the most important works of Corot, exhibiting with rare felicity his sense of classical composition and his exquisite feeling for certain moods of nature. In the perfect harmony of the values and the magic of the color it represents the artist at his best. Full of an artless graciousness which is bewitching, at the same time astonishingly simple and subtle, it is painted in a flowing, rather thin medium, with such a sureness and lightness of touch that one wonders when studying the technique closely, how, being so spontaneous, so apparently simple, it can be made to fully express all the serenity and the poetry of a moonlight night. Against a tender, tremulous sky of great depth and luminosity the masses of the trees loom dark, but with a transparent darkness permeated with the ambient refulgence. All is quiet, yet all is alive. The clouds are moving, the moonlight suffuses the sky and dances on the water, the trees stir with low whisperings. The goddess is not a lay figure, nor is she the conventional creature Academicians think a goddess should be, but one of those pure-minded young women *père* Corot used to paint, a very real person, sleeping gently even if two cupids hover above her. It is a picture of silence with an undertone of music—a picture of animated repose. Like the best Corots, like his best figure pieces, it is full of movement. And the general tone of it is that exquisite silvery tone which is unique in all art.

AUGUST F. JACCACI.



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